

Writers Talking With Writers

WriteBoston inspires future authors with speakers series



Edith Pearlman and future BCLA short story writers

it Down and *Meeting at the Waters* and the biography *Growing Up X*, worked as a journalist around the world for many years. After describing her experiences in Liberia during a civil uprising, McLarin gave students the facts and instructed them to write a lead, or a short, clear introduction to a news story. Students enjoyed discussing writing and journalism as a career with McLarin.

This spring, WriteBoston teachers and students have been rewarded with a series of authors ranging from short story to magazine editors to experts on epic poetry. Published authors from PEN New England inspire students to explore their ideas through writing, and they help WriteBoston teachers see the power of developing a culture of writing within the classroom. Visiting authors are incorporated into existing curricula and courses of study. These special guests discuss careers in writing, the writing process, the world of publishing, and the importance of writing as a creative means of expression.

o **Epic poem and Greek experts Fred Marchant and George Kalogeris** assisted freshmen in Ms. McDade's classes at BCLA with their understanding of Homer's *The Odyssey*. Marchant and Kalogeris, both poets, writers, and professors, discussed the importance of reading texts from ancient cultures. The discussion helped students understand the connections among their own writing and the writings of the past.

o Eighth graders at the McCormack were journalists for a day when author and journalist **Kim McLarin** led them through a writing activity on February 28. McLarin, author of novels *Taming*

o To help students begin to write personal narratives, WriteBoston brought writer **Sven Birkerts** to two senior classes at BCLA on March 28. Birkerts' own memoir, *My Sky Blue Trades*, was the focus of the discussion. Students asked Birkerts about his writing style, his reason for writing his memoir, and how his memoir has shaped his current relationship with his family. Birkerts also led students in a remembering and writing activity that helped seniors generate topics suitable for their personal narrative. His writing prompts helped students focus on an earlier time in their childhoods and then examine those moments to see what made them memorable.

o To further expose **Odyssey** students at South Boston to effective science writers, WriteBoston collaborated with the **Charles River Conservancy** to bring **Karl Haglund** to the school on April 2 to explain his writing and research practices. Haglund met with a large group of students to discuss the Charles River and its impact on the history and development of Boston. Haglund showed a wide array of slides, including maps, sketches, and photographs. Haglund's impressive book *Inventing the Charles River* was donated to the Odyssey students by the Charles River Con-

servancy, and Odyssey teachers and the WriteBoston writing coach have already incorporated the maps and writings into their lesson plans.

o **Edith Pearlman** has been a writer for 35 years, and has published over 100 short stories and over 100 non-fiction pieces. Before her visit with BCLA juniors in April, Pearlman provided copies of her short story "Binocular Vision," previously published in the Sunday *Boston Globe* Magazine. Students read the story and completed questions to analyze character and thematic elements. After Pearlman's visit, these students will soon write their own short stories in a writer's workshop cycle.

o **Poet and Boston Globe columnist Ellen Steinbaum** visited BCLA classrooms of freshmen and sophomores in April as part of National Poetry Month. Steinbaum led two classes of students in a poetry activity that generated some poetry reflecting the students' concerns and fears about current events in Iraq. In addition to helping students write about their feelings of the world, the poems may be submitted to the school's first literary magazine.

WriteBoston anticipates the continuation of this special relationship with authors and other professionals who use writing in their professional and personal lives.



Sven Birkerts discusses memoirs with seniors.